

THE SYSTEMIC INFLAMMATORY RESPONSE TO DENTAL PLAQUE

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Submitted to the faculty of the University Graduate School
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy
in the School of Dentistry,
Indiana University

January 2010

Accepted by the Faculty of Indiana University, in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have been blessed to be surrounded by a great group of individuals throughout PhD training. It is my pleasure to thank those who made this dissertation possible.

I owe my deepest gratitude to my mentor and role model, Dr. Michael Kowolik (Department of Periodontology), to whom I will be grateful forever. Without him, none of this work would have been possible. His continuing support, guidance, and encouragement helped me make it throughout these long years of studying and researching. It is very hard to thank him enough. My dissertation is dedicated to him.

I am deeply grateful to my other advisory and research committee members, Drs. Dominique Galli (Department of Oral Biology), Richard Gregory (Department of Oral Biology), Bradley Allen, and Sherie Dowsett, for their invaluable support, scientific input, and constructive feedback. I would like to especially show my gratitude to Dr. Galli for allowing me to use her laboratory while conducting my in vitro investigation and for helping with the microbiological aspects of this investigation. I would also like to especially thank Dr. Gregory for his continuing guidance and support. I have been very fortunate to have him as my mentor during my Masters training, the director of my PhD program, a member of my research committee, and the chair of my advisory committee. I would like to express my special thanks to Dr. Sherie Dowsett for her invaluable assistance particularly with my writing skills. She has been of great help in improving my scientific writing, and creating figures, tables, posters, manuscripts, and presentations. I

am grateful to Dr. Bradley Allen for his scientific input particularly, with the medical aspect of my studies.

I am very thankful to Mr. George Eckert for helping with the statistical analyses of the studies. I am very grateful for his invaluable assistance in analyzing the data and moreover, for his willingness and patience to spend the time to teach me the statistical analyses aspects of my studies.

I am grateful to the staff of OHRI especially Liliya Lukantsova, and Sue Kelly for managing and coordinating our clinical studies and for responding to questions related to my dissertation. Without their friendly assistance, this work would have been very difficult.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all my friends including Cunge Zheng, Fengyu Song, Nawaf Labban, Nouf Al-Shibani, Rodrigo Vieceilli, Wallace McCarlie, and Weiping Zhang for their support, encouragement, and friendship.

I am very thankful to NIH for their financial support and funding the research studies that are discussed in this dissertation.

I am very grateful to my parents, my sister, and my brothers for their unconditional love, support, encouragement, and prayers throughout my life. Special thanks go to my brother Ahmad and his wife Sahar. I could not have made it without their love, help, and support during my PhD training.

I offer my deepest gratitude to my husband Nael and to my daughter Layla for providing all the love, strength, support, understanding, and patience during all these years. I love them so much. None of this would have been possible without them. My entire life is dedicated to them.

Finally, I am pleased to deeply thank all of those who assisted me in any respect during the completion of my PhD.

ABSTRACT

Vivian Y. Wahaidi

The Systemic Inflammatory Response to Dental Plaque

Introduction: Bacteremia involving oral bacteria and the systemic inflammatory responses are mechanisms that could causally link oral and systemic diseases. Objective: To use an experimental gingivitis model (EGM) in 2 clinical studies to 1) examine the systemic inflammatory responses to dental plaque, and assess racial differences in these responses; 2) determine whether dental plaque accumulation causes bacteremia and subsequent systemic responses following toothbrushing. Additionally, a laboratory study was conducted to examine the interaction between circulating human neutrophils and *Fusobacterium nucleatum*. Methods: For both clinical studies, healthy adults, aged 18-31 years, were recruited. In the first study, black and white, males and females participated in a 21-day EGM; in the second study, white adults participated in a 7-day EGM. In both studies, subjects visited the clinic weekly for: 1) measurement of the plaque index (PI) and gingival index (GI); 2) collection of peripheral blood samples to evaluate systemic markers of inflammation. In the second study, to analyze bacteremic episodes during the experimental phase, peripheral blood samples were collected at baseline and at 0.5, 5, and 30 minutes post-toothbrushing. In the laboratory study, interactions between *F. nucleatum* and circulating neutrophils were examined using a luminol-enhanced chemiluminescence assay. Results: During the experimental phases of both clinical studies, PI and GI increased ($p < 0.05$) with a correlation between PI and GI ≥ 0.79 . In the first study, dental plaque accumulation resulted in a systemic response that manifested as

changes ($p < 0.05$) in the level of inflammatory markers, hematologic factors, markers of lipid metabolism, and markers of metabolic change. This systemic response differed between individuals of different gender and race. In the second study, bacteremic episodes and changes in hematologic factors were observed post-toothbrushing during the experimental phase. Activation of neutrophils with *F. nucleatum*, in the laboratory study, increased the levels of neutrophil chemiluminescence ($p < 0.05$). Conclusions: Overall, the findings of these investigations may shed light on the mechanistic pathways by which oral infection may impose risk for systemic diseases and provide some evidence to support a possible causal association between oral and systemic diseases. The clinical significance of this in systemic inflammatory diseases requires further investigation.

Michael J. Kowolik, B.D.S., Ph.D., Chair

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHA	American Heart Association
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
ATCC	American Tissue Culture Collection
BMI	Body Mass Index
CHD	Coronary Heart Disease
CO	Carbon Monoxide
CRP	C Reactive Protein
ESR	Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate
fMLP	formyl-methionyl-leucyl-phenylalanine
GCRC	General Clinical Research Center
GI	Gingival Index
Hb	Hemoglobin
Hct	Hematocrit
HDL	High Density Lipoprotein
IL	Interleukin
IRB	Institutional Review Board
LDL	Low Density Lipoprotein
MCH	Mean Corpuscular Hemoglobin
MCHC	Mean Corpuscular Hemoglobin Concentration
MCV	Mean Corpuscular Volume
MPV	Mean Platelet Volume
OH	Oral Hygiene

OHI	Oral Hygiene Instructions
OHRI	Oral Health Research Institute
PBS	Phosphate Buffered Saline
PCR	Polymerase Chain Reaction
PI	Plaque Index
r	Correlation Coefficient
RBC	Red Blood Cell
RPMI	Roswell Park Memorial Institute
SD	Standard Deviation
SE	Standard Error
TNF	Tumor Necrosis Factor
UV	Ultra Violet
WBC	White Blood Cell

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